

MAR 26 2008

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT #15
GRAY ♦ NEW GLOUCESTER

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March 17, 2008

Susan Gendron
Commissioner of Education
Maine Department of Education
23 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Update on Consolidation Activities SAD15 & Union 29

Dear Commissioner Gendron:

In response to your letter of March 7, 2008, I would initially let you know that no further formal RPC meetings have taken place since November. With Union 29 having unilaterally decided to disassociate itself from SAD 15 and seek an autonomous reorganization, it seemed abundantly clear to all involved that no further action should be taken until you had decided on the merits of their proposal as well as the concomitant opinion you requested of SAD15 concerning this action. In early February you acknowledged receipt of the aforesaid documents and indicated that you would render a decision on or about February 15, 2008. You have since made two additional requests for further information requiring additional time and correspondence to comply. If, as I suspect, it is not coincidental that your reluctance to render a verdict on this matter has more to do with seeing the lay of the reorganization land after March 28, 2008, than with a genuine need for more information, the courtesy of just saying so would be much appreciated. I have currently spent over sixty hours in RPC meetings, assembling information for you, and drafting correspondence. Unlike the legislature, your department, and staff, this time is entirely voluntary. When added to the hundreds (or even thousands) of other volunteers around the state dealing with this legislation, this represents a staggering cooptation of human capital; especially when it has been encumbered with the task of implementing what you know in your heart of hearts is probably the least well considered, poorly developed, abhorrently written piece of legislation to come out of Augusta in recent memory.

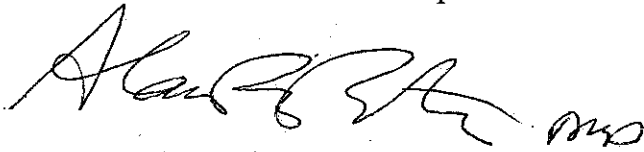
We have worked with conscientious diligence in honoring our responsibilities to develop a plan for an RSU with Union 29. It was clear that they were always as best a reluctant partner in this enterprise. Their surreptitious request to you in early January did not sit well with the volunteers from Gray and New Gloucester on the RPC, and many of them are reluctant to devote more, potentially wasted, time to this merger. It seems absolutely clear to me that SAD 15 remains,



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despite significant investments of time and treasure, unable to find a logistically and geographically acceptable partner for consolidation. We are exactly what the law defines as a 'doughnut hole'. We have already taken proactive steps to align our management model with state recommendations, there can be few districts in Maine which overspend the EPS number by as little as we, and I would put forward the transparency of our budget development process as an exemplar for the state. For many years our budgets have been passed via district referendum without controversy and by overwhelming margins. In a nutshell, we have over the past three or four years performed a 'preemptive consolidation' of our district's practices which have resulted in a fiscal efficiency unthinkable ten years ago. I would earnestly request that you consider our alternate plan at your earliest, dare I say, politically expedient convenience. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Rich', followed by a small, stylized mark that looks like 'MSAD'.

Alan Rich
MSAD #15 School Board Chair